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# Post-modern Diplomacy: Can EU Foreign Policy Make a Difference in World Politics?

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# **Post-modern Diplomacy: Can EU Foreign Policy Make a Difference in World Politics?**

**Dieter Mahncke**

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## About the Author

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## Abstract<sup>1</sup>

Although much discussed, there is in fact very little common EU foreign policy. The main reason for this is the reluctance, even the resistance of the member states to grant more authority to the Union in this field. This is unfortunate because the European Union could make a distinctive and positive contribution to the development of peaceful conflict resolution and a rule-based international order. This paper looks at three questions: the reasons for the lack of a common European foreign and security policy, what institutions might make a critical difference in developing more commonness and what the specific characteristics of a 'post-modern' EU foreign policy might be.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper will appear as a chapter in the forthcoming book by Maciej Wilga and Ireneusz Pawel Karolewski (eds.), *New Approaches to EU Foreign Policy*, 2012.

## **Introduction**

The key questions that the notion of a common European foreign and security policy faces are not whether adequate institutions and the right personnel are available. Although important, those are secondary questions. The main issues are: first, whether and how a common foreign policy can indeed be brought about, and second, what the nature of such a common foreign policy might be. This paper explores these issues and looks into why the European Union might be particularly suited and able to pursue objectives that are frequently subsumed under the concept of a 'post-modern diplomacy'. The term 'diplomacy' broadly refers to everything an actor does on the international stage. However, what is meant here is not the technique of modern diplomacy – although much has changed there, too – but rather its content, that is the foreign policy of an actor, in this case the European Union.

For the purposes of this paper, post-modern foreign policy will be understood as encompassing two major components: first, collective and other-regarding interests as essential elements of policy next to self-regarding interests, and second, the objective of effectively promoting the development of international relations towards a rule-based order grounded on the recognition of common interests and peaceful conflict resolution. Such a foreign policy and concomitant diplomacy would not only synergise political objectives with economic, security, development and cultural policies but it would require the EU to mainstream collective and other-regarding interests in its foreign policy. The purpose would be to enhance peaceful interaction and overall stability, in the long-term and world-wide. The question is whether the European Union could indeed make a difference: through its own model of peaceful conflict resolution in the collective interest as well as by a foreign policy that successfully promotes a new type of 'international governance'.

The development of such a foreign policy will necessarily consist of two inter-related steps: arriving at a common policy and determining its nature. This paper thus looks at the reasons why it has been and is so difficult to arrive at a common foreign policy as well as what institutions might play a primary role in promoting more commonness before going into what the nature of a European post-modern foreign policy might entail.

## Why is there no common foreign policy?

After the agreement on the set-up of the new European External Action Service (EEAS) had come about on 8 July 2010,<sup>2</sup> the two key actors on this issue in the European Parliament (EP), the German Christian Democrat Elmar Brok and the Belgian Liberal Guy Verhofstadt, emphasised that only a structure had been created, not yet a common foreign policy: “[W]e can only supply the structure. Now it is up to all of us, to Lady Ashton, the Council, the Member States, the Commission and the EP, to develop a coherent policy and to bundle our competences and expertise.”<sup>3</sup>

Structures are important for procedures; they can ease or constrain them. But they provide no guarantee that a common policy will in fact be achieved and implemented. The will to attain it is prerequisite.

Unfortunately, the outlook is hardly encouraging. Throughout the establishment of the European External Action Service in 2010 it was apparent that except for the European Parliament the project of a common foreign policy had no lobby. The Commission was concerned that it might have to sacrifice competences or prerogatives in the field of external relations,<sup>4</sup> and the Council was intent on maintaining its institutional set-up by first creating a new Crisis Management and Planning Directorate and then transferring it *en bloc* to the External Service.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> On this day the European Parliament adopted by overwhelming majority (549 in favour, 78 against, 17 abstentions) the Report presented by Elmar Brok; see European Parliament, “European External Action Service”, European Parliament legislative resolution of 8 July 2010 on the proposal for a Council decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service (08029/2010 – C7-0090/2010 – 2010/0816(NLE)), P7\_TA(2010)0280, 8 July 2010. Subsequently, the Council took a formal decision on 26 July 2010 establishing the EEAS, see Council of the European Union, “Council Decision of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service (2010/427/EU)”, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L201, 3.8.2010, pp. 30-40.

<sup>3</sup> Elmar Brok, *From Global Payer to Global Player*, Interview by Stefani Weiss, *Spotlight Europe Special*, July 2010, Gütersloh, Bertelsmann Foundation, p. 5. Guy Verhofstadt added: “We now have a good political instrument, but we need as well the political will to use it.” *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> In fact, one of the first steps of President Barroso was to move the important competence for the European Neighbourhood Policy “from the Commissioner for External Relations, where it had been located in the previous Commission, to the Commissioner for Enlargement”, thus ensuring that it would not fall under the competence of the new High Representative; see Stefani Weiss, *External Action Service. Much Ado about Nothing*, *Spotlight Europe*, June 2010, Gütersloh, Bertelsmann Foundation, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> On the bickering between the various actors see the analysis by Weiss, *ibid.*

The key actors, however, were the member states. It became entirely clear that they wanted neither an institution nor a procedure nor a person that would be in a position to force them or even to be able to pressure them in the direction of a common foreign policy. They did not want to sacrifice their room for manoeuvre in an area that they consider vital, even if the room for manoeuvre is not that big anymore. But events on the international stage and the development of the international order are uncertain, and hence national governments prefer to keep a free hand to pursue a policy which they feel is best suited to the specific national interest in any specific situation. Of course, this may also occur within the European framework, but does not have to. The European Union with its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is only one option among several.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, a common European foreign policy – ‘together we are strong’ – just does not appear to be urgent. There may be many arguments why it is in fact exigent or would at least be advantageous, but most EU governments simply do not look at it that way. To most, there is no pressing external threat or challenge (or benefit!) that would be sufficient to bring the Europeans together. There are regular calls that a common energy policy, joint efforts on climate or a common policy for the Middle East would be desirable or even imperative, but that is about as far as it goes. The fact is that there is neither a sense of need nor sufficient external pressure to bring the Europeans together.

In other words, the common foreign and security policy, where- and whenever it does come about, is primarily (as one perceptive observer has noted) a ‘convenient’ policy. It is a policy that comes about when all can agree because the various national interests are either viewed in similar fashion, there are in fact no strong interests involved or the policy arrived at is based on the lowest common denominator.

It is thus entirely logical that the High Representative and Vice President of the Commission (HR/VP), Lady Catherine Ashton, sees her key task in working on the member states behind the scenes to persuade them to follow a common approach,

possibly parallel but at least not contradictory courses of action. This was no different when Javier Solana was the High Representative. It is, without doubt, one of the main tasks of the High Representative. But if there is no marked policy outcome, acting only behind the scenes necessarily means that the EU foreign policy representative is not out front on the stage. If it is an objective that the EU should have a stronger voice and carry more weight on the international stage, then the High Representative thus far has fallen short of the target (and under the circumstances is not alone to blame for this).

Of course, there has been progress, particularly when the period for comparison is set far enough into the past. But the question is whether such progress should be measured by comparing it to the situation twenty years ago or by the necessities of today and the needs of tomorrow. Thus, the EU is setting up a European foreign service which, however, is not to be called a foreign service. The High Representative is not to be named foreign minister and the Union delegations may not be labelled embassies.<sup>7</sup> One may want to call this mere symbolism rather than substance. But symbols symbolise what is wanted. They indicate an objective, and here they indicate that at least a significant number of member states do not want institutions or procedures that will ensure a common European foreign policy that is more than *ad hoc* and comes about only when it happens to be convenient. In this sense, too, deleting the flag and the hymn from the Constitutional Treaty was no trifle. It showed that the objectors do not want a European Union based on a common identity and the common loyalty of its citizens. A 'convenient' Europe seems to suffice.

But is that sustainable? Is it possible to build a strong Europe, capable of defending its interests in the international arena, on such uncertain ground? What has already become apparent in the economic sphere is also valid for foreign policy. A significantly larger degree of political unity with binding majority decisions is prerequisite to meeting up-coming challenges.

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<sup>6</sup> Among many, two glaring examples illustrate the point: the disagreement on the recognition of Kosovo and the disagreement on reactions to events in Libya in the early months of 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Some of the smaller member states that do not have embassies in all areas of the world, had hoped that the Union delegations might perform some functions, e.g. consular tasks, but this was rejected.



## Is a common foreign policy possible?

Despite progress and despite instances of a common EU foreign policy, one can hardly make a good case arguing that the Europeans are on a clear path towards achieving such a policy, let alone having come near the target. There are multiple examples that could be cited where the lack of a common European stance was as glaring as the potential advantages had there been one. The fundamental divisions over the American intervention in Iraq were close to devastating, the fact that not all of the member states see themselves in a position to recognise Kosovo is embarrassing, and the uneven reactions to the events in the Arab countries at the beginning of 2011 are revealing.

Finances and foreign policy are two pillars of traditional state sovereignty. In both areas the member states of the Union are reluctant or simply resistant to giving up powers to Brussels. There are two reasons why progress seems to come more readily – although not easily – in the economic sphere. The first is that the only country that stood to lose something by the introduction of monetary union in 1999 was Germany, the continent's largest economy – and Germany was willing to submit itself: because this was apparently the price to be paid for French acquiescence to German re-unification,<sup>8</sup> because the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl was convinced that the common currency would ensure the 'point of no return' for the process of European integration and – most importantly – because the large majority of Germans were at this time still strongly committed to the idea of European unity.<sup>9</sup> The second reason for the more ready progress in the economic sphere is that in the early phases the expected economic benefits, but since then the growing economic challenges, are determinants that have rapid, immediate and usually attributable consequences for the individual citizen.

These reasons give a good indication of why there is so much less movement in the foreign policy realm. All countries feel that they would have something to lose, there is no dominant actor who might set an example, the needs do not appear as

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<sup>8</sup> This point is controversial, but there have been several indications that some sort of a 'deal' was struck. France, after all, was highly interested in wresting the power of the Deutschmark from Germany.

<sup>9</sup> This may be changing with German citizens becoming increasingly sceptical. See, for example, Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger, "Wieder mal auf Sonderfahrt? Deutschland kommt der europapolitische Enthusiasmus abhanden", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 23.5.2011, p. 10.

pressing and the potential benefits are not as obvious (and may not come about at all, since even with a common foreign policy the results would depend on the policy itself).

There is no way around it: a common foreign and security policy in Europe by way of better institutions or more elaborate procedures has not come about. More than two decades since the signing of the Treaty of Amsterdam provide ample evidence for this. A common foreign policy will only happen based on what politicians and academics like to call somewhat vaguely 'political will'. But 'will' implies resolve. That is, the member states must *want* a common foreign policy. Short of an outside threat such will or resolve can only be based on more political unity. Political unity in the European Union must rest on the following requirements: the development of a truly European civil society with the concomitant trans-group trust, the growth of a common, trans-national loyalty to the Union<sup>10</sup> and awareness that the problems of one are the problems of all.<sup>11</sup>

It is this latter point that seems to be a decisive hurdle. Can we expect the government of Spain to be as concerned about Russia as the governments of the Baltic Republics are? And can we expect the latter to be as concerned about migration from Africa as Spain is? Is it conceivable to arrive at something like the United States where illegal migration from Mexico to Texas is considered not (only) a Texan, but (also) an American issue, although the citizens of Maine or North Dakota are not immediately affected?

Up to this day this has not been achieved in Europe. That is the prime reason why the call for solidarity in the debt crisis of Greece, Ireland and Portugal met with such a mixed reaction in the European public (outside of the concerned countries, of course). It was particularly understandable in the case of Germany for two major reasons. First of all, in all such cases Germany has to bear by far the largest share of the financial burden. Secondly, it was Germany that throughout the decades, from Maastricht to Lisbon, had consistently been calling for more political unity – and was

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<sup>10</sup> As the former Bavarian Prime Minister Franz-Joseph Strauß is quoted as having said: It must be possible to be a good Bavarian, a good German and a good European at the same time.

<sup>11</sup> Admittedly, the comparison is a bit skewed, but it is ironic that these are the very aims, specifically civil society and trans-group trust, that form key objectives of EU policies towards precarious states and developing democracies.

equally consistently disappointed. Perhaps this will once more be recorded as a story of 'missed opportunities'. Whatever the case may be, the fact is that there is no common European identity solid enough to form the foundation of common European policies in critical areas or critical times.

Even if persistently ignored, the issue will not simply disappear. The question of political unity – the much avoided *finalité politique* – is on the table. Ignoring it is a decision with consequences. It means that the EU will continue to move down the slippery path – on which it already is – towards becoming something like a large customs union with a few supranational components and a limited amount of soft influence beyond its borders (and an uncertain future). It will go into the history books as an ambitious experiment with many good results but well short of its objectives.

Can this course be changed? Currently, there is not much to give hope. But there are two institutions that might make a difference: the European Parliament and the High Representative/Vice President together with the External Action Service.

### **The critical role of the European Parliament**

The European Parliament is the hub of European integrationist thinking. Apart from the small group of Euro-sceptics, the vast majority of its members favour further and deeper integration. Parliament can use all of its instruments to call for a more coherent and unified European voice in foreign affairs. It can follow the conduct of EU foreign policy closely and on a day-by-day basis. Parliament and its committees can question the HR/VP and EEAS officials on any foreign policy issue,<sup>12</sup> can query why coherence and consistency of policies are lacking, and it can exert influence on member states that are dragging their feet.

From the very beginning of its founding and increasingly since the first direct elections in 1979, the European Parliament has worked towards extending its powers. In its own understanding it represents the European people, thus the sovereign, and

hence has the right and the obligation to oversee and guard the direction and development of the Union.

In the area of foreign and security policy, the extension of its competence and powers went step by step, from treaty to treaty. The current status is determined by the Lisbon Treaty that went into effect on 1 December 2009.<sup>13</sup> In addition to its increased powers in the traditional areas of competence,<sup>14</sup> including all those areas of 'external relations' that fall within the competence of the Commission, the European Parliament sought to gain more influence also in the field of foreign policy.

The biggest prize was, of course, the newly to be established European External Action Service.<sup>15</sup> The initial and most far-reaching objective of Parliament was the integration of the Service into the Commission. Not only does the EP have full parliamentary control over the Commission, but integrating the EEAS into the Commission structure would have included the foreign and security policy components of the Council, thus 'supranationalising' these components and actually extending the EP's competence over areas previously under the exclusive control of the member states.

Not entirely surprisingly, this objective was not achieved. Instead, the EEAS was set up as "a functionally autonomous body of the European Union, separate from the General Secretariat of the Council and the Commission with the legal capacity

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<sup>12</sup> The Lisbon Treaty does not say anything about the right of the EP to request EU diplomats to appear before Parliamentary committees, but in the Council Decision establishing the EEAS, it was agreed that the HR/VP would "facilitate" such appearances. See Council of the European Union, "Adoption of a Council Decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service (2010/C 210/01), Draft Declaration by the High Representative on political accountability", *Official Journal of the European Union*, C210, 3.8.2010, pp. 1-2.

<sup>13</sup> Council of the European Union, "Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union", *Official Journal of the European Union*, C 83, 30.3.2010, pp. 1-388.

<sup>14</sup> The Lisbon Treaty has granted the European Parliament significant new law-making and budgetary powers. Some 40 new fields (including trade, energy, immigration, justice and home affairs, health and structural funds) are now subject to the co-decision procedure between Parliament and Council. Parliament now decides on the entire budget (the previous distinction between 'compulsory' and 'non-compulsory expenditure' having been discarded).

<sup>15</sup> See specifically the Council Decision of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service (2010/427/EU), *op.cit.*

necessary to perform its tasks and attain its objectives".<sup>16</sup> Competences and administrative units were transferred from both Council Secretariat and Commission.

However, making use of its budgetary<sup>17</sup> and staff regulation competences,<sup>18</sup> the European Parliament succeeded in a number of critical points. Most importantly, it achieved full budgetary control over the External Action Service,<sup>19</sup> including over personnel seconded from member states.<sup>20</sup> It was also conceded that recruitment "should be based on merit whilst ensuring adequate geographical and gender balance".<sup>21</sup> To ensure the 'community character' of the EEAS, it was agreed that "permanent officials of the Union should represent at least 60% of all EEAS staff at the AD level".<sup>22</sup>

While Parliament did not succeed in achieving something like co-decision with the High Representative on the appointment of personnel for the top positions in the EU Delegations, it was conceded that it could invite appointees for a discussion (rather than a formal hearing, a custom in any case not prevalent in European foreign services):

The HR will respond positively to requests from the European Parliament for newly appointed Heads of Delegations to countries and organisations which the Parliament considers as strategically important to appear before the AFET for an exchange of views (differing from hearings) before taking up their posts. The same will apply to the EUSRs.<sup>23</sup>

It is also foreseen that the HR/VP "will facilitate the appearance of Heads of delegations, EUSRs, Heads of CSDP missions and senior EEAS officials in relevant parliamentary committees and sub-committees in order to provide regular briefings."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. 1 (2)

<sup>17</sup> Art. 14 (1) TEU, *op.cit.*

<sup>18</sup> Regulation No. 31 (EEC), 11 (EAEC), laying down the Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of other Servants of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community (O) 45, 14.6.1962.

<sup>19</sup> See Council Decision 2010/427 of 26 July 2010, (14), *op.cit.*

<sup>20</sup> This was of some concern to the Parliament, but it succeeded in ensuring that seconded personnel will be held fully responsible to the EP in terms of the budget.

<sup>21</sup> Council Decision 2010/427 of 26 July 2010, (10), *op.cit.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. 6 (9).

<sup>23</sup> Council Decision, 2010/C 210/01, (5), *op.cit.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, (7).

The European Parliament has to consent to international treaties that the Union signs<sup>25</sup> and it was reasserted that it is to be regularly consulted and its views “duly taken into consideration”.<sup>26</sup> On CFSP, the HR/VP “will seek the views of the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of this policy in conformity with Article 36 TEU.”<sup>27</sup> Arrangements were also to be made for “access for Members of the European Parliament to classified documents and information of the CFSP”.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to its budgetary and legislative functions, Art. 14(1) of the Lisbon Treaty establishes that the European Parliament “shall exercise functions of political control and consultation”, and this is where it may ultimately have the most far-reaching influence. Parliament’s role in this respect is emphasised:

In her relationship with the European Parliament, the High Representative (HR) will build on the consultation, information and reporting engagements undertaken during the last legislature [...] Where necessary, these engagements will be adjusted in light of Parliament’s role of political control.<sup>29</sup>

Taken together, the European Parliament has gained in status in the area of foreign policy. Its influence on the High Representative, who as a member of the Commission is at least partly and, of course, wholly dependent on Parliament for the EEAS budget, could extend significantly. The EP can develop into the vanguard in portraying the European role in the world, in developing awareness of this role amongst all European citizens and in pushing the Union and its representatives into actively developing and representing those policies that support and further European interests. If Parliament commits itself and if it uses the powers that it has, it can make a difference.

### **Can the High Representative and the EEAS do more?**

While the role of the European Parliament lies in strengthening awareness of foreign policy issues, overall European interests and European identity in facing the

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<sup>25</sup> “The European Parliament will be, in accordance with Article 218 (10) TFEU, immediately and fully informed at all stages of the procedure, including agreements concluded in the area of CFSP.” Council Decision 2010/C 210/01 (2), *op.cit.*

<sup>26</sup> Council Decision 2010/427 of 26 July 2010, (6) *op.cit.*

<sup>27</sup> Council Decision, 2010/C 210/01, *op.cit.*

<sup>28</sup> Council Decision 2010/427 of 26 July 2010, (6) *op.cit.*

<sup>29</sup> Council Decision, 2010/C 210/01, *op.cit.*

challenges, the European External Action Service will have a more immediate task of implementing European foreign policy in meeting day-to-day requirements.

The EEAS, formally launched on 1 December 2010 and with more than 1600 civil servants in the initial phase, is the diplomatic service of the European Union.<sup>30</sup> Whereas in the past the Commission delegations concentrated primarily on trade and development and particularly on project management,<sup>31</sup> they are expected to take on more political tasks in the future.<sup>32</sup> This will mean, on the one hand, representing the EU and informing about it, both in the wide sense of public diplomacy, i.e. winning sympathy, and in the sense of information in order to establish closer relationships in areas such as economic or educational cooperation.<sup>33</sup> Seeking to influence both relevant elites and the public in general is part of this function.

On the other hand, the EEAS diplomats, stationed in third countries, will be expected to report to Brussels on the on-going relationship, on opportunities that may arise for the EU (in trade or in any other area) and on political developments. It is the political function that is new, not primarily in terms of reporting to Brussels – to a limited extent this has taken place in the past<sup>34</sup> – but in terms of having a new ‘receiver’ or addressee in Brussels: the EEAS and the High Representative tasked with the development and implementation of EU foreign and security policy.

The key challenges for the External Action Service and the High Representative are:

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<sup>30</sup> For a closer analysis see Dieter Mahncke and Sieglinde Gstöhl (eds.), *European Union Diplomacy: Changes and Challenges under the Treaty of Lisbon*, College of Europe Studies, Brussels, PIE Peter Lang, *forthcoming*.

<sup>31</sup> For a short history see European Commission, *Taking Europe to the World – 50 Years of the European Commission External Service*, Luxembourg: 2004, as well as the Washington Delegation History at <http://www.eurunion.org/delegati/DCDelHistory.htm> (retrieved June 2011).

<sup>32</sup> See Mahncke/Gstöhl, *European Union Diplomacy*, *op.cit.*

<sup>33</sup> On the changes with regard to modern diplomacy see *ibid.*, ch. 1.

<sup>34</sup> However, the rather astonishing fact must be noted that the developments in the Arab states of North Africa in early 2011 apparently caught the EU by surprise! After all, the EU did have Commission delegations in these countries and with its projects generally being close to the ‘grass roots’ one would have expected ‘early warning’. It is not clear whether this did not occur because there were no reports or because there was no ‘receiver’ in Brussels, whether the ‘receivers’ did not respond or whether the reports got lost in the bureaucratic maze.

- to set up a capable and efficient Service with highly qualified personnel,<sup>35</sup>
- to provide the Service with clear and precise guidelines on what the targets and tasks are,
- to use the resources of the Service to develop foreign and security policy concepts and alternatives.

Primarily the latter task – the development of policy concepts and alternatives – should provide the High Representative with a basis for more wide-ranging activities. In particular, this should provide an adequate foundation for the HR/VP to be able to take the initiative in the discussions with the member states as well as in public statements. The Lisbon Treaty gives the High Representative the right to submit initiatives or proposals.<sup>36</sup> In other words, the HR/VP must be more than a ‘receiver of orders’ from the member states and the ‘implementer’ of such orders. There is nothing in the Treaty that bars the High Representative from being active and outgoing in the presentation and promotion of own initiatives and proposals. This is where new opportunities lie. Who else, if not the High Representative, with the support of a large bureaucracy, can move the Union towards a common policy and a single voice? The President of the European Council can go in the same direction, but lacks the extensive support base which the HR/VP has. Ideally, of course, the two would move together.

## **A new foreign policy**

When considering the idea of a common European foreign and security policy, the issues most frequently discussed are what institutional arrangements might ease the making of such a policy and how coherence between the institutions, the different policies and between the member states and the EU might best be ensured. Much less attention is paid to the question of what type of foreign policy this might be.

In view of the difficulties of even coming close to something that deserves to be called a common European foreign and security policy, this is understandable. In frustration or at least in endeavouring to gloss over the shortcomings, a – not entirely convincing – attempt was made to differentiate between a ‘common’ and a

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<sup>35</sup> On the training of EEAS personnel see Mahncke/Gstöhl, *European Union Diplomacy*, *op.cit.*, concluding chapter.

<sup>36</sup> Art. 30 TEU, *op.cit.*



'single' foreign policy.<sup>37</sup> A common foreign policy, it is assumed, would be a policy which sets aims and all member states act, in their individual foreign policies, in accordance with these aims. A single foreign policy would apparently mean something more, namely that there would be an approved single definition as well as agreement on the means and the concrete implementation of the policy. But as long as the EU is not something much closer to political union with a single foreign ministry – not something to be expected soon – the only realistic concept is a 'common' policy in the sense of common and agreed objectives. Member states' foreign policies would move independently but in a coordinated manner to avoid contradictions, secure division of labour and ensure both coherence and consistency. This is exactly what has been attempted since the Treaty of Amsterdam and the creation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The Treaty of Lisbon is no more than an effort to further improve institutional and procedural arrangements:

Within the framework of the principles and objectives of its external action, the Union shall conduct, define and implement a common foreign and security policy, based on the development of mutual political solidarity among Member States, the identification of questions of general interest and the achievement of an ever-increasing degree of convergence of Member States' actions.<sup>38</sup>

Member states are repeatedly called upon (implored?) to adhere to the common policy of the Union, to exercise political solidarity and not to act against the interests of the Union:

The Member States shall support the Union's external and security policy actively and unreservedly in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity and shall comply with the Union's action in this area.

The Member States shall work together to enhance and develop their mutual political solidarity. They shall refrain from any action which is contrary to the interests of the Union or likely to impair its effectiveness as a cohesive force in international relations.<sup>39</sup>

But there are even stronger treaty – hence legally binding – commitments. Member states are called upon to:

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<sup>37</sup> This differentiation was brought up when the discrepancies between the policies of member states were all too obvious and there was a feeling that it would be good to lower the targets.

<sup>38</sup> Art. 24(2) TEU, *op.cit.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. 24(3).

consult one another within the European Council and the Council on any matter of foreign and security policy of general interest in order to determine a common approach.<sup>40</sup>

Moreover:

Before undertaking any action on the international scene or entering into any commitment which could affect the Union's interests, each Member State shall consult the others within the European Council or the Council. Member States shall ensure, through the convergence of their actions, that the Union is able to assert its interests and values on the international scene. Member States shall show mutual solidarity.<sup>41</sup>

These are strong commitments. Most specifically, the Lisbon Treaty extended the authority of the High Representative to be responsible for the 'preparation' and 'implementation' of the common foreign and security policy.<sup>42</sup> And, of course, it is the High Representative's primary task, to bring the member states together and to ensure solidarity.

But if all of this were achieved, what type of foreign policy might this be? What are the principles and objectives that should guide EU foreign policy, the High Representative and EU diplomats?

Besides providing a wide array of more specific objectives of EU foreign policy, Art. 21 of the Treaty of Lisbon denotes that:

The Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.<sup>43</sup>

These are noble aims, but obviously EU foreign policy is guided not only by ideals but also by interests. The pursuit of both ideals and self-interest is the norm for foreign policy in democratic states. It would be foolish and hardly credible if the EU were to pretend that it does not pursue interests. The European Union is one of the world's

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. 32.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. 27.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. 21.

major economies. It is a major trader. It has close to 500 million citizens. EU foreign policy must inevitably keep the particular interests of its citizens in mind.<sup>44</sup>

But it would be equally foolish to claim that the EU pursues particular short- and mid-term interests only. The European Union has broader aims. In its Security Strategy of 2003 it makes no bones about the intention to influence the world: "An active and capable European Union would make an impact on a global scale. In doing so, it would contribute to an effective multilateral system leading to a fairer, safer and more united world."<sup>45</sup> This was underlined in clear terms by former Commissioner for Development, Louis Michel: "Nous pouvons ensemble véritablement façonner un monde plus juste et plus équitable, et donc peser sur le destin du monde. Et parce que nous le pouvons, nous le devons."<sup>46</sup>

But ideals and long-term interests may converge. The Union must be interested in 'sculpting' the world into a shape that ensures its survival and the maintenance of its basic values also in the long run.<sup>47</sup> In fact, the EU is quite clear on this. As delineated in the European Security Strategy,<sup>48</sup> it strives to achieve a more peaceful and stable world, a 'rule-based international order' in which conflicts are not resolved by force but by 'effective multilateralism', i.e. peaceful conflict resolution by negotiation and the use of institutions, specifically international organisations. Through 'preventive engagement' potential problems are to be spotted early and dealt with before they achieve crisis dimension. While it is recognised that the EU would be better off in a world of 'well-governed democratic states' it is not prerequisite that all states must be democracies. They only need to be sufficiently 'well-governed' so as to be stable and not to create disruptive problems. They must adhere to certain basic rules in

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<sup>44</sup> A good example for a combination of particular and other-regarding interest is the European Neighbourhood Policy; see Dieter Mahncke, "The Logic of EU Neighbourhood Policy", in Dieter Mahncke and Sieglinde Gstöhl (eds.), *Europe's Near Abroad. Promises and Prospects of the EU's Neighbourhood Policy*, College of Europe Studies 4, Brussels, PIE Peter Lang, 2008, pp. 19-46.

<sup>45</sup> European Council, *A Secure Europe in a Better World – The European Security Strategy*, Brussels, 12 December 2003. This document was further embellished by the *Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy – Providing Security in a Changing World*, approved by the European Council in Brussels on 11 December 2008.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted by David Spence, "EU Governance and Global Governance: New Roles for EU Diplomats", in Andrew F. Cooper, Brian Hocking and William Maley (eds.), *Global Governance and Diplomacy: Worlds Apart?*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 74.

<sup>47</sup> These thoughts are based on a previously published article by the author; see ch. 1 in Mahncke/Gstöhl, *European Union Diplomacy*, *op.cit.*

<sup>48</sup> European Council, *A Secure Europe in a Better World*, *op.cit.*

their international relations and they need to be committed to peaceful resolution of conflict. Underlying it all is economic development: eradicating poverty and offering all peoples a fair perspective.

Creating a 'better world' is an ideal, but it is also a long-term interest simply because the European Union and its members would be safer and better off in such a world. Moreover, the EU is particularly well-suited to make a bold attempt in this direction. First of all, it is itself a model of peaceful conflict resolution. The Union brings together 27 states with different histories, traditions and memories and quite a few of them with a long history of hostile relations with each other. These member states have developed a system and a habit of peaceful conflict resolution between themselves,<sup>49</sup> a fact easily taken for granted, but in reality a revolution in international affairs. Thus, the procedure, process and habit of peaceful conflict resolution comprise a key factor that Europeans can promote and contribute to international relations.

A prerequisite to peaceful conflict resolution is the acceptance of compromise. This means that even when a party to a conflict is dissatisfied with the compromise, it will accept the result because acceptance and thus maintaining the overall system of peaceful conflict resolution offers more advantages than non-acceptance and the resulting conflict. Both peaceful conflict resolution and compromise thus require a critical degree of overall satisfaction with the status quo – in terms of status, prosperity, power and so forth – as well as certainty that there are fair procedures by which conditions may be changed. A system that does not allow for peaceful change cannot guarantee peace.<sup>50</sup>

Whether it wants to or not, the European Union represents a model of compromise and peaceful conflict resolution. Such a model may indeed be an "export commodity".<sup>51</sup> Whatever other ideologies may offer, no other model succeeds as well in combining freedom with peace and prosperity. Wherever suppressed peoples

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<sup>49</sup> See the excellent and detailed study by Cross Davis, Mai'a K., *The European Diplomatic Corps: Diplomats and International Cooperation from Westphalia to Maastricht*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

<sup>50</sup> See on this Dieter Mahncke, "A New World Order?", in August Reinisch and Ursula Kriebaum (eds.), *The Law of International Relations, Liber Amicorum Hanspeter Neuhold*, Utrecht, Eleven International Publishing, 2007, pp. 211-227.

<sup>51</sup> Spence, *op.cit.*, p. 71.

rise – as in North Africa in 2011 – this is the model they proclaim to be seeking. For the European Union this means that its foreign policy must consistently show that it is not only pursuing ‘self-regarding’ European interests but is at the same time an active protagonist of ‘collective’ and ‘other-regarding’ interests. The relevant distinction here is between:

the usually promoted and emphasized *self-regarding interests* (where the state in question is first and foremost the interested party), the less emphasized *collective interests* (where several states and actors enjoy advantages in common) and the usually ignored *other-regarding interests* (where the interests of other actors are dominant, but where the state in question can derive indirect benefit from the improved situation of other actors).<sup>52</sup>

Since compromise is the life blood of the EU and EU foreign policy is young and in a sense a ‘new invention’, it is conceivable that the European Union would place enhanced emphasis on collective and other-regarding interests. This would be different from traditional ‘national interest’ diplomacy and could well be regarded as ‘post-modern’ diplomacy and a specific contribution of Europe – the ancient ‘continent of wars’ – to modern international relations. The EU concept of ‘conditionality’ and the European Neighbourhood Policy are examples of such an approach, whatever their shortcomings may be.

For this, the EU claims to have a particularly wide array of foreign policy tools – from trade to cultural exchange, from development aid to crisis management – and is thus singularly well-suited to aim for and implement more fundamental – structural – foreign policy aims: “as a soft power, the EU ought to have the ability to use various policies in order to have a real impact on the global stage.”<sup>53</sup> Indeed, the EU is well equipped to combine development and security, trade and climate change or any other combination of issues and to place them in an overall EU foreign policy framework that combines the concepts of preventive engagement and effective multilateralism with the appropriate policies and tools.

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<sup>52</sup> Quoted from Stephan Keukeleire and Jennifer MacNaughtan, *The Foreign Policy of the European Union*, Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 2008, p. 21. Keukeleire and MacNaughtan base their argument on Alexander L. George and Robert O. Keohane, “The Concept of National Interests: Uses and Limitations”, in Alexander L. George (ed.), *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy*, Boulder, Westview Press, pp. 217-238.

<sup>53</sup> Verhofstadt interview by Weiss, *op.cit.*, p. 5.

But who is to do this? Can the High Representative, confronted by jealous institutions and wary member states, with a carefully circumscribed mandate and little stature, be expected to develop the required initiative and vision? The issue thus remains the same as before: Is there a will to create that 'single European voice' on the international stage that can provide vision and weight or will the EEAS remain an agency to implement mainly technical and limited objectives?

## Conclusions

For the future three issues stand out as in need of further analysis. First, there must be more concentration on EU foreign policy outcomes rather than policy-making processes. Analysts – both academics and politicians – have tended to concentrate on institutions and procedures. Thus, for example, there are numerous studies on the making and particularly the objectives of CSDP activities but few on the results.<sup>54</sup> However, it is time to 'normalise' the study of EU foreign policy and to move away from the inward- to a more outward-looking approach. Foreign policy analysis normally concentrates on results – and moves back from there to assess the appropriateness of the means and measures. Domestic decision-making processes are usually a specialised sub-topic. While entirely understandable that the EU has focussed much effort on this, it is time to move on. Assessing results will have three beneficial effects. It will show what the ambitions of the EU are, what results the EU is actually achieving, and, last but not least, what the Union needs to do if it wants to make a difference.

Second, this will lead to a closer look at the basics of EU foreign policy and particularly the role of the High Representative and the External Action Service. If EU foreign policy ambitions or needs stand out but policies, such as there are, show meagre results, the reasons for this will need to be analysed. They will become apparent fairly quickly and highlight, on the one hand, the underlying lack of political unity and, on the other, the limited competence and effectiveness of the instruments that exist. It will be up to the Europeans to draw conclusions from this and to undertake appropriate measures. It is of little use to continue the current practice

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<sup>54</sup> A notable exception is Muriel Asseburg and Ronja Kempin (eds.), *Die EU als strategischer Akteur in der Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik? Eine systematische Bestandsaufnahme von ESVP-Missionen und -operationen*, Berlin, SWP Studie S 32, December 2009.

of pointing to institutional improvements and lauding highflying objectives but ignoring results.

Third, it will be necessary for the Union to define more precisely (than in the Lisbon Treaty or in the European Security Strategy) what its foreign policy objectives are and what concrete policy implications they have. This would make the differences and the interplay between self-regarding, collective and other-regarding interests clearer, both for the Union and for third parties.

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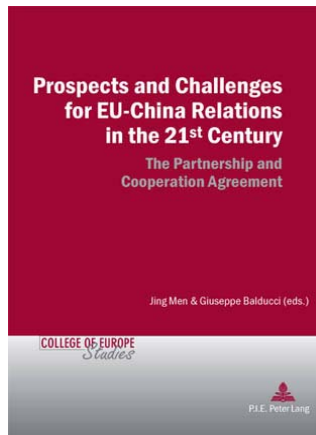
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